

# The Hammer Times

Operation Enduring Freedom 07-09



## Message from the Battalion Commander

This edition of our monthly newsletter is dedicated to giving thanks. For some it was thanks with their families, friends, and way of life. For many it is about courage, self sacrifice, and the driving energy of our well-trained and disciplined Soldiers and support we receive from our Families.

I am thankful that Soldiers are the centerpiece of our formation. Members of our squads, platoons, and companies who have weathered the threat, austere work and living conditions, and the day to day life when deployed without their families. I remain humbled by the character of service your Soldiers provide. As of this letter, 62<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) Soldiers have been awarded 6 Bronze Stars (with Valor), 25 Purple Hearts, and 173 Combat Action Badges. In every one of these awards are examples of Soldiers taking care of Soldiers.

I am especially thankful for Rear Detachments and Family Readiness Groups who spend countless hours taking care of our Families, helping to identify and solve issues, and providing access to community resources and valuable information. Our capability and strength comes from knowing that we have strong and ready Rear Detachments and Family Readiness Groups.

Finally, I am thankful to be part of this exceptional Army Engineer Battalion. Our history is deep in the construction of roads, operating bases, and force protection in some of the most rugged terrain in Northern America. Your Soldiers are well-trained and have become “builders of choice” across the 750 kilometer area from Jalalabad to Kandahar. We are making the difference, and you know it.

Thank you for supporting our Soldiers and their Families. Please remember, we are the Hammer Battalion—building the battlefield and making history!



**EQ installs a culvert at FOB Airborne**

## Message from the Battalion Command Sergeant Major

Happy Holidays! I trust everyone had a good Thanksgiving, I know I did. I was able to spend Thanksgiving day at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Airborne with the Soldiers of HSC and A Co. SSG Woodruff (Sr. Cook) and crew put on a great spread in their brand new Dining facility. There was plenty of good food and the Soldiers, contractors, and local nationals all had more than enough to eat.

I was fortunate to spend some time traveling to several FOB's to see our Soldiers and SeaBees at work. I assure you that they are staying very busy – from sun up to sun down – working on both the horizontal and vertical projects. It is amazing to see them shape and build the battlefield. I would relate their work to an artists work, shaping and molding a raw piece of land into its final design is truly amazing.

This IS hard work, but necessary work. As the only heavy construction engineer battalion in theater, our skills are in high demand. There is no better place to get the level of experience that our Soldiers are getting right here.

One issue I would like to address is mail. For expectation management, I would like to put it in perspective. Several Soldiers have conveyed their frustration to family and friends about the slow mail delivery. I can assure you that the battalion staff is doing everything in their power to ensure mail is delivered as quickly as possible. The handling of U.S. Mail falls under several federal regulations, and we must adhere to them even in theater. With our Soldiers traveling across the battlefield and often staying for only short periods of time at each location, it can be difficult for the mail to catch up to them. This, coupled with the Holiday season, can equal delays; but again, I assure you we are working diligently to get the mail out as quickly as possible. We do appreciate your patience and understanding.

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I would be remised if I didn't mention the holidays and how important it is during this time of year to support our Soldiers and SeaBees. For some it is their first holiday away from family and friends. I would hope that many have bonded with their deployed family and will help each other through this holiday period. Keep those packages coming and please keep our wounded Soldiers in your thoughts and prayers.



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## Headquarters and Support Company "Pale Riders"

As we approach the Holiday season, I become more and more impressed with the amazing sacrifice the HSC Paleriders and all of our families make. What becomes even more apparent during these special times is the outstanding support everyone on the home front is making. The amount of letters, cards and care packages are nothing short of remarkable. The support in all of its forms gives your Soldiers even more motivation to execute their daily missions.

This month has been another extremely productive and busy month for HSC. As is the norm, the company is spread throughout the battlefield providing support to every company in the battalion. The Paleriders have been tasked with various missions through the deployment, and this month they continued to excel in all their construction tasks and support functions.

The Equipment Platoon (EQ) completed all of their tasks for FOB Airborne expansion on time and to an outstanding standard. SSG Hilario, SSG Canty and SGT Barnes were the lead NCOs during the execution of the construction. These NCOs, along with their outstanding Soldiers, worked from sun up to nightfall to ensure their quality work was completed before the short deadline. Their engineer effort was lauded by the FOB occupying unit for its quality and professionalism. EQ represented the company in an outstanding manner throughout the duration of the project. You should be very proud of the efforts made by the Soldiers of EQ and all of those who supported the company's main effort.



**SPC Wiczorek and PFC Barron  
return from the jobsite**

One of the key support elements of that effort was the maintenance section that sustained the readiness of the construction equipment. Led by SSG Trevino, the team consists of SGT Dilback, SGT Scott, SGT Kenneth, SPC Manso, SPC James and SPC Colvin. They worked hard to identify equipment faults, order the correct replacement parts, and repair the vehicle in order for the mission to be accomplished. The team worked in difficult environmental conditions, yet they were able to maintain the fleet fully mission capable throughout the extent of the mission. This group of mechanics was also supported by the mechanics back at FOB Sharana. The HSC maintenance personnel as a whole continue to perform exceptionally well.



**2<sup>nd</sup> plt, A Co, on the porch of their newly  
constructed building**

I want to send a special thanks to 2nd Platoon, A Co. These fine Soldiers were attached to HSC for FOB Airborne expansion. All of their work was professionally done. The platoon works fast while maintaining a high standard for all of their construction efforts. They built nine guard towers that set the standard for the battalion, and a large structure that will house the headquarters element of an incoming unit. It was a great experience to have vertical construction assets attached to our company and we would gladly welcome them to be on the Palerider team at any opportunity.

On behalf of the Paleriders, I want to wish you Happy Holidays! We will all be here thinking of our loved ones at home. Please continue to send your letters and packages for your Soldiers. Watching the expression on a Soldier's face when they open up anything sent from home never gets old. All of your efforts provide great motivation to you Soldiers. I would also like to personally thank you for everything you do. You make my job much easier by providing the motivation the Soldiers need...the motivation that comes from their families.

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## Alpha Company “Gators”

Throughout November, the A Company platoons continue to be far spread and fully occupied. 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon continues their construction at FOB Airborne, the Earthmovers are still expanding FOB Shank, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 68<sup>th</sup> CSE (attached), has conducted combat movements between FOB Sharana and FOB Kushamond, with the support of Headquarters and Maintenance Soldiers.

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, 68<sup>th</sup> CSE, made remarkable progress this month in preparing, repairing, and driving equipment from FOB Kushamond to FOB Sharana. Supported by a team of maintenance Soldiers led by SGT Mumma (see Soldier Spotlight), 1LT Loulis’ platoon readied 13 trucks for a two-day combat movement through a very hostile area in the central Paktika Province. They focused their efforts for 12 days on repairing every possible deficiency on these trucks—test driving them for at least an hour every day to ensure that they were combat ready. Their efforts paid off during the combat mission, as the trucks made the journey through hills, wadis, and miles of sand dunes without mishap. I cannot give enough praise to the non-commissioned officers of that platoon whose disciplined maintenance work and attention to detail ensured a successful combat patrol through difficult terrain.



**Gator Soldiers dig holes to emplace posts**

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, A Company (vertical construction), continues to shine as one of the best vertical construction platoons in the battalion. Despite challenges in the timely arrival of lumber and other materials, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon has doggedly continued constructing two headquarters buildings, and is nearing completion, nearly a month ahead of schedule. From the platoon led by 1LT Kathryn Hermon and SFC Gilberto Pagan, I would expect nothing less.



**2nd Platoon, A Co, establishing the standard with guard tower construction**

The Earthmovers are committed to the expansion of FOB Shank, preparing force protection barriers around the perimeter and constructing an Entry Control Point (ECP) to screen and control the entry and exit of Coalition Forces’ vehicles and authorized contractors. Their work will ensure the safety of Soldiers and materials necessary for the long term improvement of Afghanistan.

As you can see, I continue to be amazed by the superior work your Soldiers have accomplished in such little time. Their work is directly contributing to safety, supply support, and command and control of US Soldiers and other Coalition forces across Eastern Afghanistan.





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## Bravo Company "Battledawgs"

### Battledawg 6

The Soldiers of Bravo Company are still residing at FOB Maywand or as the ISG likes to refer to it "FOB BATTLEDAGW". Your Soldiers never stop working to give not only us but all of our Infantry brethren a more comfortable quality of life. Whether it's hooking up hot showers, installing heating or putting doors on tents, gravelling roads, or increasing force protection, our Soldiers not only lead the way but are the sole providers. We are definitely the popular ones on the FOB. Now that we have a PX up and running, hot chow, and pretty frequent mail deliveries the base that was once nothing has become a home to hundreds of Soldiers. Thanksgiving was fantastic; we had a great meal prepared by 2-2 Infantry, soccer, football and of course tug-of-war. The holidays are the hardest time for being deployed and away from our families but we have each other to lean on through this special time of year and we know that we will be home soon which makes it a little more bearable. As we are coming up on Christmas and the New Year, just know that our thoughts are always with our loved ones at home just as we know yours are with us. The mail, phone calls, and emails you constantly provide us keep us going and on behalf of all of the Battledawgs we would like to wish all of you Happy Holidays and thank you for your never-ending support.

### Battledawg 7

As another month winds down at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Maywand, or as I like to say FOB Battledawg, the days are shorter and less warm and the nights are longer and colder. This allows all Soldiers to test their Extended Cold Weather Clothing Systems that was designed to be functional in multiple cold weather climates and activities. Once again Soldiers on are the homestretch for completing the mission and as the Holiday season approaches; your packages are the highlight of the Soldier's day. Thanks for continually lifting the morale of the Battledawgs.

### 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon

The month of November has flown by as the Soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon continue to do great things here on Forward Operating Base Maywand. Despite the lower temperatures, morale remains high as the Soldiers continue to accomplish various projects to improve life on the FOB. This month, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon built an additional 44 tent floors, increasing the living capacity on the FOB by over 400 Soldiers. They also worked tirelessly with EM platoon to construct an operations compound for the radar system, consisting of 3 tent floors and a reinforced 20'x20' resting pad for the radar. 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon has spent the last week relying on a bit of innovation while constructing over 20 tent doors, each of which had to be custom made. The Soldiers are looking forward to next month and more projects that will improve the quality of life for us and the Soldiers of TF 2-21N.

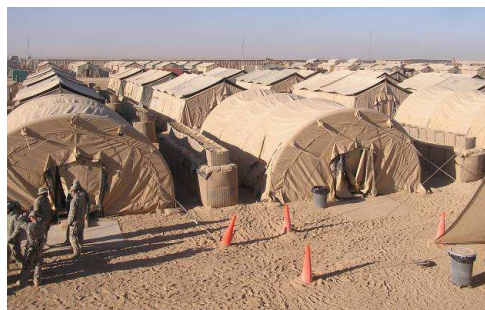


**1st Platoon constructing tent floors for the radar team**

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon

2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon has accomplished many tasks this month in order to build up FOB Maywand. The entire platoon has now moved out to the FOB and loving every second of it. We have been working non-stop to support the maneuver units in the region. The picture below displays what the platoon has accomplished from nothing. We have built tent floors, winterized guard towers, and many more.

Another obstacle we have to face is the cold winter. The weather is getting frigid and we are doing our best to stay warm throughout the night with new heaters. The winter season also means the holiday season. We are all grateful for your support during this time of year.



### EM Platoon

The Earthmovers platoon continues to show hard work in the month of November. EM has been working sun up to sun down in FOB Maywand breaking grounds on all kinds of projects. EM has built roads, improved force protection, received over 5,000 cubic meters of gravel and assisted the 2-2 Infantry in numerous ways. In addition to all of this EM now has a new platoon sergeant at the helm: SFC Arnoldo Amador. SFC Amador is no stranger to EM though; he was with EM in Iraq and prior to deploying. The Soldiers of EM are also ready and charged to push full throttle heading into the cold Afghanistan winter.

First squad took the lead on the construction of the access road and has completed it in record time. This has greatly improved conditions into and out of FOB Maywand. The entire squad did an outstanding job on the access road, and has truly made EM proud!

Second squad has been working hard to earn their keep and has never let anything get them down. They have assisted with interior roads and making living conditions better for FOB Maywand by constructing a Class I water site and emplacing gravel for hygiene areas. All of 2<sup>nd</sup> squad has pitched in any way they can by operating equipment, by emplacing HESCOs, and by pulling security for their battle buddies

### LSA constructed by the Battledawgs

while they work.

Third squad finished up the month of November strongly by working on an improved entry control point (ECP) for the new FOB. They have working early in the morning until late into the evening day in and day out to ensure they are ready for any mission and to get the FOB a better ECP. They have built more lanes for traffic to pass through and have emplaced an area for the MILVACIS (a machine designed to assist with the searching of vehicles).

### Maintenance Section (Desert Cowboys)

The Desert Cowboys were not done moving around quite yet. Once we were finally established in Kandahar Airfield (KAF) we picked up and went with the rest of Bravo Company out to FOB Maywand. With all of our people on ground with the exception of SGT Pace, who had remained in KAF to support our daily maintenance and reports.

Once on ground we picked up our services, which we had fallen behind on and we bought out Parts Received not Installed (part conex) out with us. This kept us busy for the entire month of November. With the new roads being built it seemed like a daily occurrence to have our Earth Movers (EM) Platoon roll in with one or two issues. With some of our parts conexas on ground, we were able to keep pace with and sometimes get way ahead of EM.

The cold weather moved in on us and our Extreme Cold Weather Clothing Supply (ECWCS) really came in handy. We were grateful for the Army issuing it to us. Inside of this issue is a big fluffy down jacket which was a great hit with most of the Soldiers. We realize that we are not as cold as you are back at Ft. Sill with our temps dipping down to the teens, but it is getting quite chilly out here in the morning and as soon as the sun goes down. It's like someone turned the heater off on us.

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## Charlie Company “Cobras”

Hello again from FOB Fenty, Camp Joyce, and Combat Outpost (COP) Altimur, and Happy Holidays! As always, the Company is spread all throughout Afghanistan in support of the many missions that challenge us, yet the Soldiers of C Company continue to excel. This past month has been extremely busy for Charlie Company with platoons finishing up missions and pushing hard to complete the expansion of two FOBs that will be the home to two incoming Battalions.



**SPC Griswold and SPC Clark pose with local contractors at Camp Joyce**

1st Platoon saw an end to their missions in AO Raider with the completion of COP Lowell winterization and has met up with EM Platoon at COP Altimur. They spend much of the month traveling and preparing for their next mission; to construct a double SEA Hut that will serve as a battalion TOC. The platoon is now hard at work to complete their mission before the arrival of the incoming unit.

2nd Platoon made a tremendous impact by finishing up winterization projects at COP Nagil, OP Dallas, and COP Altimur. The platoon is preparing to reunite after being divided between Camp Joyce, COP Altimur, and their multiple winterization projects. They have worked extremely hard to complete the initial projects at Camp Joyce, and the platoon will now work together to complete a double SEA Hut TOC to house the battalion headquarters that will arrive this winter.

EM is still divided between Camp Joyce and COP Altimur, providing horizontal construction support for both. They are working long hours and laying the foundation to provide both 1st and 2nd platoon with solid groundwork from which to build. EM platoon has completed an amazing amount of work at both Camp Joyce and COP Altimur. Thanks to their hard work the incoming units will have a well-built and secure new home.

HQ has been supporting the company from FOB Fenty, pushing tools, building materials, new uniforms, and much needed cold weather gear out to the platoons. They look forward to pushing out all of the holiday mail to the platoons over the coming month.

Maintenance is supporting the company at COP Altimur, Camp Joyce, and FOB Fenty ensuring all equipment being used during construction projects are properly maintained. As equipment starts to falter, the mechanics are there to get that piece of equipment up and running so deadlines on projects are met.

Every Soldier in Charlie Company has been busy completing construction projects above expectations. As we enter the Holiday Season, C Co Soldiers are still hard at work to improve the conditions for other Soldiers here in Afghanistan. We miss all of you back home, but look forward to seeing you in the New Year!



**SGT Powell and CPL Quinn working on a Guard tower at FOB Fenty**





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## 68<sup>th</sup> Combat Support Equipment “Trailblazers”

As I write December’s newsletter, I realize that another month has come and gone. We are well past the halfway point of the deployment. Over the past thirty days the weather has definitely gotten a little chillier during the early morning hours ranging from the mid 20’ to low 50’s. Although snow flurries were spotted at FOB Sharana and can be seen on sporadic mountain tops, we have not had our first snow of the year. For those of us from warmer climates, this is a much appreciated fact but soon enough the snow will come.

With December comes the completion of two major projects. First platoon recently finished construction operations at Zerok and have returned to FOB Orgun-E for some needed rest and equipment maintenance. Operating at a remote location, their performance while on ground was highly praised, bringing respect and pride for the trailblazer team. With the arrival of a new Platoon Leader and Squad Leader, this time will definitely help to establish team cohesion as they prepare for their next mission. Our third platoon continues to operate at FOB Shank working in conjunction with the 4<sup>th</sup> Naval Mobile Construction Battalion’s (NMCB) detachment, and a platoon from Alpha Company. Working long arduous hours, they have definitely witnessed the fruit of their labor. Under the expert guidance of the platoon sergeant, the Soldiers have doubled the size of the existing FOB by completing all groundwork necessary for both contractors and Sailors to execute their respective mission.



**SGT Stephens conducts EO training with vertical Soldiers**



**IPLT Soldiers inspect equipment after operations at Zerok**

We have received several new Trailblazers, and some Soldiers from within the battalion, over the past few months and they have not been properly introduced. Therefore, I would like to welcome PV2 Oxstien, PV2 Estes, PV2 Walker and PFC Long, PVT Moore (a vertical Soldier assigned to Alpha), SSG Caraballo, PFC Connor, LT Lotts, and SFC Roach, to the Trailblazer family. As we began to prepare for our next missions, the arrival of SGTs Risner and Lerma will truly be an asset. Finally, I would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays from all the 68<sup>th</sup> CSE Trailblazers. For those of you fortunate enough to have your Soldier home for the Holidays, I ask that you cherish the opportunity. For the rest of us, reach out to your friends and family and keep them in your thoughts and prayers. “Blaze On”

The maintenance platoon continues to support construction and general FOB tasks. Although no longer working 15 hour days, the platoon continues to complete every mission. From providing troubleshooting guidance via email, FM radio or TACSAT, their drive and desire to excel is clearly evident in every Soldier. Our adopted trailblazer vertical Soldiers are also at FOB Orgun-E. However that is only on paper, since over half the platoon is currently supporting construction at other locations. Although gone for weeks at a time, they regularly return to the FOB in order to reset and receive mail.



**Santa Moose is coming to town**

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## 74<sup>th</sup> Multi-Roll Bridge Company “River Rats”

The 74th is approximately one month away from welcoming our replacements to Balad, however the missions aren't over quite yet. All the Soldiers remain busy with bridge replacements and repair missions, but the end of the deployment is coming very soon and is serving as excellent motivation.

Soldiers have also been keeping busy in between missions, to include playing in the Thanksgiving Army vs. Air Force football game and just relaxing in the company area watching college football. The big game here was Ohio State vs. Michigan. The River Rats got the pizza and banners out for this one. It turned out the Buckeyes stomped the Wolverines.



**A rousing River Rat soccer game**

Although we are not done, it was great to see the Soldiers enjoy themselves with an activity they are going to do back home.

We are approaching the end here soon, and we are proud of all the things the 74th MRBC has accomplished. We still have several missions remaining, but we are also in the process of beginning to gear up for our redeployment. There are many steps involved to get us back to our loved ones.



**Yet another bridge repair mission**

Our projected arrival back in Fort Hood is in February, as we get closer and find out more info we will send it to the Family Readiness Group to publish the news to the home front. Send your packages and letters sooner than later. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

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## Soldier Highlights

The Palerider Soldier of the Month is SGT Dilback. SGT Dilback is married to Jessica Dilback and has four children; Jason, Jordan, Austin and Thearin. He has been a mainstay for the maintenance effort at FOB Airborne. During his time at FOB Airborne he has performed above and beyond his appointed duties. He serves as the Palerider maintenance recovery team NCOIC and he is also the shop foreman for the maintenance team at FOB Airborne. While on his current mission, SGT Dilback has been on eight recovery missions. The missions have included HSC equipment, A/I-506 IN equipment and even some local national equipment. He was personally responsible for changing a HMMWV engine in under 36 hours in austere environmental conditions. In addition to his daily duties, he trained 7 A/I-506 IN Soldiers on the principles of operations of the HEMMT Wrecker during his personal time. SGT Dilback was essential in maintaining the construction fleet operational in order to allow the company to accomplish its mission.



PFC Karlson has performed exceptionally well in his first few months in 1st Platoon, Charlie Company. He came to the platoon as an electrician with minimal experience and has shown a fierce determination to learn and become one of the better electricians in the

platoon. Arriving to the platoon shortly before the mission at FOB Joyce, he quickly integrated into the platoon and became a vital part of the team. His initial lack of knowledge was overshadowed by his motivation and perseverance. He has truly made himself a strong asset to the platoon and will be expected to take on a much larger role in the future.



PFC Nathan G. Justice is recognized as the A Company Soldier Spotlight for December 2008. A native of Asheville, NC and a graduate of Clyde A. Erwin High School, he joined the Army under the delayed entry program while still in high school and is now a Construction Equipment Repairer (MOS 62B). He came to A Company in March 2008 and deployed to Afghanistan just a month later. In the short time since he arrived to the company, he has proven himself to be a critical member of the company maintenance and readiness team. On a recent trip to FOB Kushamond, PFC Justice applied his outstanding diagnostic and problem solving skills as he helped repair and prepare 14 trucks for a tactical mission, with limited tools and parts resources. He then volunteered to drive a tanker truck with over 1,000 gallons of kerosene fuel on a two-day combat patrol through the Paktika Province of eastern Afghanistan, demonstrating great personal courage with his trademark smile. His family has a history of military service, with both grandfathers having served in the military, and an uncle who recently retired from the Army. He is the son of Renee and Grady Justice and the brother of Brenna Metcalf and Pless Justice.



In late July, SGT Goodman was selected to operate independently out of FOB Salerno in order to coordinate the logistical requirements needed to complete winterization of 9 combat outposts in support of CJTF-101. Finally returning back to FOB Orgun-E in late November, his face was unfamiliar around the Company area and was presumed to be a new trailblazer. However, thanks to the 'Good Ole' Army name tape we were able to recall the long lost Trailblazer Soldier and welcome him back and congratulate him on a job well done. Although forced to face the hardships of Pizza Hut and the local Green Bean coffee shop he always stayed focused on the mission and provided the company with the leadership and professionalism required to execute the task at hand.



After 4 months, SGT Goodman finally returns to FOB Orgun-E

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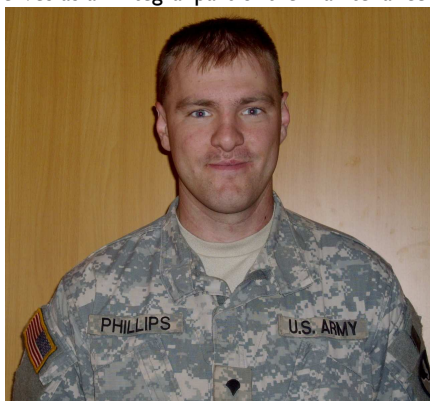
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## Soldier Highlights

SPC Phillips, 74<sup>th</sup> MRBC, is from Monterey, CA and is 23 years old. He was raised around the military by his mother Karen Davison-Phillips. Upon graduating from Eastern Wayne High School, he felt that he had an obligation to serve his country as a part of the armed forces. He enlisted in the North Carolina Army Reserve as a 62B (Construction Equipment Repairer). SPC Phillips completed his Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. He returned to the North Carolina Army Reserve where he served diligently for three years as an AGR Soldier before he decided he could do more for his country by becoming an active duty service member. His first active duty assignment was with the 74<sup>th</sup> Multi-Role Bridge Company, Ft. Hood, TX. SPC Phillips knew what would be expected of him when he became an active duty mechanic and was ready to deploy a mere 60 days after arriving to Ft. Hood. He is currently on a 15 month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom where he serves as an integral part of the maintenance section. His efforts ensure that the 74<sup>th</sup> MRBC's vehicles are ready to roll out at a moment's notice and keep the warfighters moving throughout the battle space. He is also called upon regularly to travel with the Soldiers of the 74<sup>th</sup> MRBC to serve as a recovery asset operator. SPC Phillips is preparing to re-enlist so that he may continue his career of serving the Army. He applies his mechanical knowledge to his hobby by continuing to modify and tune his 1995 Nissan 240SX for drifting competitions.



SPC Rhiannon Brazell was chosen as B Company's Soldier of the Month. She has displayed a tremendous work ethic and always presents a positive attitude. SPC Brazell's dedication not only contributed to this month's success, but the completion of earlier projects as well. She was a key participant in the construction of the Passenger Terminal at the FOB Sharana airfield, and she completed eight guard towers for the protection of Soldiers at FOB Kutzbach and FOB Morales-Fraser. Hailing from Green Springs, OH, home of the country's largest natural sulfur springs, SPC Brazell committed a tremendous personal effort to physical training, achieving a new personal record on her last Army Physical Fitness Test. She is supported by her grandmother, Mary Lou, and her sisters, Brianna and Sadie. Upon returning to the states, she looks forward to enrolling in college and seeing her family again. SPC Brazell's hard work and dedication make her an example for all Soldiers to follow.

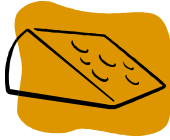


**SPC Brazell works on a tent door at FOB Maywand**

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## Chaplain's Corner

Greetings 62<sup>nd</sup> family,

Christmas away from the ones we love is hard for all of us. At times it seems pretty futile to try and count blessings when we're separated from family during this time of year. But I'm finding everyday that there is always something for which we can give thanks. The love and concern expressed by folks back home is definitely one of those **"somethings."**

I've been impressed by the support from back home ever since I've been in Afghanistan. During the holidays, however, folks have gone above and beyond my wildest expectations in their support for the Soldiers.

Many groups across the country have taken special interest in meeting the needs of the men and women separated from families and the comforts of home. I went away for a week and returned to find 19 boxes of goodies awaiting me. It took all weekend to go through them and make them available for our troops. Cards, candy, cookies, hygiene supplies and DVD's for our "CH EEZ Video" have poured in from sources around the country. Our most sincere thanks goes to all of the groups supporting us during the Holidays. Some groups that have assisted my ministry to Soldiers here at Sharana are:

### Adopt-a-Chaplain – CA

Operation Gratitude – Encino, CA

Totally for Troops - Gig Harbor, WA

First Baptist Church – Minco, OK

Cotton Patch Café – Nacogdoches, TX

First Baptist Church – Whitley City, KY

Lincoln Christian School - Lincoln, NE

Roper Elementary School - Lincoln NE

Operation Appreciation – Longview, TX

Two Dogs Ministries – Knoxville, TN

American Legion Unit 104 - Pinellas Park, FL

### Pathways Ministries – Mesquite, TX

Books for Soldiers (Many Locations)

Operation Support Our Troops – Naperville, IL

Concord Missionary Baptist Church – Dallas, TX

Berean Evangelical Free Church – Lincoln, NE

Callahan Road Baptist Church – Knoxville TN

Waco Housing Authority

Listen and Live Books – Roseland, NJ

WMU at FBC Palestine, TX

Girl Scout Troop 120 – Villa Park, IL

Holy Joes Café – Middlefield, CT

I also want to thank some folks personally who have made a tremendous personal sacrifice to make our stay here more enjoyable.



Helen Marshall of Richland, TX  
Ina Ayers of Eagle River, AK  
Carolyn Knowles of Eagle River, AK  
Gayle Hughes of Lincoln, NE  
Dave Davison of Jefferson County, TN  
Dave and Sandy Singleton of Knoxville, TN  
Teresa Scott of Minco, OK  
Reba Gram of Dallas, TX  
Sharon Ealey of Mesquite, TX



Thank you all very much for the gifts and support you provide for us all. You are helping to make this a very Merry Christmas indeed!

CH. E.E.Z.

TF Hammer Chaplain



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